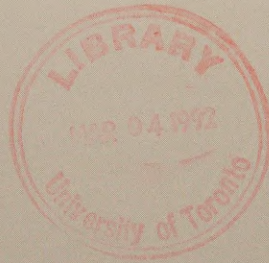


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# Annual Report 1990 -1991



## Ontario Advisory Council on Disability Issues

Ce document est aussi disponible en français sous le titre  
*Rapport Annuel 1990 - 1991.*

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# LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF CITIZENSHIP



Ministry of  
Citizenship

Ontario Advisory  
Council on  
Disability Issues

Ministère des  
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Honourable Elaine Ziemba  
Minister of Citizenship with  
Responsibility for Human Rights,  
Race Relations, Disability Issues  
and Seniors' Issues

Dear Ms Ziemba:

I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report of the Ontario Advisory Council on Disability Issues for the twelve month period ending March 31, 1991.

The broad range of Council's activities in 1990 - 1991 reflects the increased response of the Government of Ontario and society at large to the efforts of people with disabilities to realize their full integration into Ontario society.

Although there remains much to be done to achieve this goal, we take encouragement from the progress made during the 16 years of the Council's activities, and in the increased understanding and awareness which disability issues have achieved in both the public and private sectors.

The Council looks forward to advising you throughout the term of its mandate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Loveless".

Bob Loveless  
Chairman

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# CHAIR'S REMARKS

*As I leave Council after five years, I'm reminded ... that one gains as much as one gives.*

**T**he past year was a time of transition for Council, marked by a new government, a new executive officer, and seven new Council members.

I welcome the new government's efforts to open up the Council's appointment process to the entire community. However the government must ensure that this democratization does not slow down the appointment process to the detriment of Council's work.

In January, Council said farewell to Mary Tate, who served as executive officer from 1986 to 1991. With skill and diplomacy, Mary nurtured Council's recent, major reports from conception to distribution. In each instance she produced a finished product which reflected the Council's diverse experiences, sometimes conflicting opinions, and collective inspiration.

Indeed, the candle too often burned late at the Tate household as Mary honed successive drafts to consensus and meaningfulness. On behalf of people with disabilities in Ontario, and indeed beyond, a big thanks to Mary for the spirit and dedication she brought to a difficult job.

Council is delighted to have Carol Franks on board as the new executive officer. Carol has a distinguished professional background both within and outside the Ontario civil service.

Joining Council this past year for the first time were: Earl Black of Sudbury; Ron Cooper of Scarborough; Partap Grewal of Toronto; Ian McGillivray of Toronto; Hélène Monk of Ottawa; and Dr. Shirley Van Hoof of London.

Council's seventh new member was Alan LaRochelle of Toronto who died last July. Council is grateful to Alan for the insights he brought on the issue of AIDS. It was through Alan's eyes that Council members were able to understand AIDS as the devastating and disabling disease that it is.

Council's primary focus this past year has been children's issues. Many disabilities begin at birth or during childhood and for many years Council has heard how critical societal attitudes and the availability of services are during the formative years. On behalf of Council, I would like to thank all those who gave so generously of their time and personal experience during Council's two-day forum on children's issues — the parents, the services providers and especially the children and the young people.

I continue to be concerned about the backlog of unresolved cases at the Ontario Human Rights Commission; many of these cases are related to disability. Good intentions are not a substitute for action.

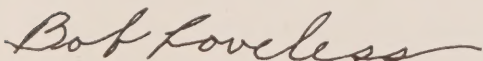
In last year's annual report I was encouraged by the Commission's new guidelines for assessing accommodation requirements for people with disabilities. A year later I am disappointed with the slowness with which both the public and the private sectors are applying these guidelines.

As I leave Council after five years, I'm reminded of a former member's observation that one gains as much as one gives.

Indeed, I have learned a great deal — especially about government. I have learned that government employees are dedicated individuals who take their public service seriously. I have learned, too, that with constructive perseverance, our democratic system does work for all of us.

I'm indebted to Council's three vice-chairs — Patricia Hatt, Anne Musgrave and Nancy Stone — for their unflagging encouragement, support, and counsel. Anne Musgrave is also leaving Council. She has served Ontario exceptionally well for 5 years. She brought a wealth of practical knowledge, well-articulated vision, and commitment to the spectrum of disability issues. She also brought her seeing-eye dog, Feather, to meetings. And before long, Feather became one of Council's favourite guests.

At Council's last meeting of this fiscal year, we reviewed the benchmarks of Ontario's "Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992" and concluded that when all is said and done, Ontarians with disabilities have made progress — however painful at times — under governments headed by all three major parties. As this report indicates, much remains to be done before full equality and integration become a reality for persons with disabilities in this province.



Bob Loveless  
Chair

# COUNCIL

*Council strives to represent all persons with disabilities in Ontario and seeks change on their behalf.*

## COUNCIL

## MANDATE

**T**he Ontario Advisory Council on Disability Issues is composed of 17 individuals from across the province. Council members do not represent any agency or organization. Most members have a disability; all members are active in their communities. A wide spectrum of expertise in disability issues and firsthand experience of living with disabilities are represented on Council.

The mandate of the Council is to advise the Government of Ontario through the Minister of Citizenship with responsibility for disability issues on matters of concern to persons with disabilities, and to respond to

requests from the Minister for advice.

Council meets six to seven times a year and periodically holds public consultations in order to hear firsthand about the problems and priorities of people with disabilities.

When Council voices an opinion on an issue it is only after it has consulted with groups composed of people with disabilities and their families, community agencies, service providers, government decision-makers and individuals. Council strives to represent all persons with disabilities in Ontario and seeks change on their behalf.

The Advisory Council is not a funding body, nor is it involved in the delivery of programs.

## COUNCIL

## HISTORY

In 1975 the Ontario Advisory Council on the Physically Handicapped was established by an Order-in-Council. In 1987 the Council's mandate was expanded to include all persons with disabilities, not just the physically handicapped. The name was changed to the Ontario Advisory Council for Disabled Persons to reflect this change.

In addition to the Council's ongoing activities, three major reports on transportation, independent living and employment have been released since 1987. The reports are **The Freedom to Move is Life Itself** (1987), **Independent Living: The Time is Now** (1988), and **Workable: Fulfilling the potential**

**of people with disabilities** (1990).

In 1990 the Council's mandate was renewed for 5 more years, and a decision was made in 1991 to change the name to the Ontario Advisory Council on Disability Issues.

## COUNCIL

## MEMBERS

**Bob Loveless**

*London*

*Chair*

**Patricia Hatt**

*Toronto*

*Vice-Chair*

**Anne Musgrave**

*Toronto*

*Vice-Chair*

**Nancy Stone**

*Niagara Falls*

*Vice-Chair*

**Denis Bergeron**

*Thunder Bay*

**Earl Black**

*Sudbury*

**Rodney Carpenter**

*Ottawa*

**Ron Cooper**

*Scarborough*

**Partap Grewal**

*Toronto*

**Sharon Hoenen**

*Bridgenorth*

**Massey Lombardi**

*Downsview*

**Roy McDonald**

*White Dog*

**Ian McGillivray**

*Toronto*

**Hélène Monk**

*Ottawa*

**Ross Robinson**

*Hamilton*

**Shirley Van Hoof**

*London*

# HIGHLIGHTS

*Council continues its ongoing functions of identifying major issues of concern to people with disabilities and responding to emerging issues.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

### STRATEGIC PLAN

**F**ollowing the renewal of the Council's mandate in March of 1990, a strategic plan was released. The plan outlines three major issues which Council has identified as its primary concerns for 1990-1995. They include:

- children's issues
- community support for persons with psychiatric and/or developmental disabilities
- sensitizing and educating professionals and decision-makers on the capabilities and the needs of people with disabilities.

The Council will continue its functions of identifying major

issues of concern to people with disabilities and responding to emerging issues.

Issues which Council will continue to actively monitor include:

- recommendations made in recent reports on independent living, transportation and employment;
- long-term care reform
- advocacy, substitute decision-making and consent issues in health legislation
- revisions to the Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Human Rights Code

The following subjects have also been identified by Council as requiring attention: persons with disabilities as the victims of crime and of abuse; AIDS; attitudinal change among persons with disabilities; education; equality of services; learning disabilities; literacy; First Nations issues; recreation; substance and alcohol abuse among persons with disabilities.

REPORTS

## CHILDREN'S ISSUES

In its strategic plan, the Council identified issues affecting children with disabilities as a top priority.

Council began its in-depth study of children's issues with a two-day forum held in December 1990 in Toronto. A wide range of concerns was expressed by parents, teenagers and young adults with disabilities, and service providers from different parts of the province.

Most concerns fell into six categories: attitudes and awareness, availability of services, obtaining services, peer support, educational opportunities, and the desire for independence.

The anecdotal evidence of difficulties faced by children with disabilities and their families ranged from uninformed medical advice, to inadequate financial assistance to stories of school bullies who taunt children with disabilities.

There were calls for an Ontario Children's Ministry to co-ordinate services, and for the Ministry of Education to provide and administer preschool programs for children.

One parent spoke for many at the forum when she said "There is considerable misunderstanding in many communities about children with hidden disabilities and public education is needed to eradicate the stigma and dispel the myths that still abound."

Forum proceedings were condensed, published and distributed to participants and other interested parties. Called **Forum on Children's Issues**, its contents will form one part of Council's major study of children's issues.

To ensure that First Nation peoples are accurately represented in its major report on children, Council is undertaking a survey of children with disabilities who live in three First Nation communities in Ontario. The survey concentrates on the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation of the Far North, the Six Nations of Brantford, and the First Nation communities of Manitoulin Island.

The surveys will identify the number of children with disabilities, the services available, and the gaps in services for children with disabilities and their families.

The results of these surveys will form another integral part of the comprehensive report to be released in 1992.

This major report on children will describe the issues and needs of Ontario's children with disabilities, their families and care providers. It will also make recommendations regarding improvements to services.

REPORTS

## WORKABLE RELEASED

M

ore than 1,500 copies of the Council's report on employment,

**Workable: Fulfilling the Potential of People with Disabilities**, have been distributed since its release in the spring of 1990.

The major recommendation of the report was the introduction of employment equity legislation to ensure that people with disabilities had access to job opportunities. This should be achieved, the report said, by setting and achieving goals and timetables rather than by a quota system. The creation of an agency at arms-length to the government, which would enforce the legislation as well as provide

services to employers to help them comply, was recommended.

**Workable** also makes practical suggestions and strong recommendations in the areas of education, training and employment preparation programs, recruitment practices and services, barriers in the workplace, income issues, sheltered employment situations, and the improvement of public attitudes and awareness regarding people with disabilities.

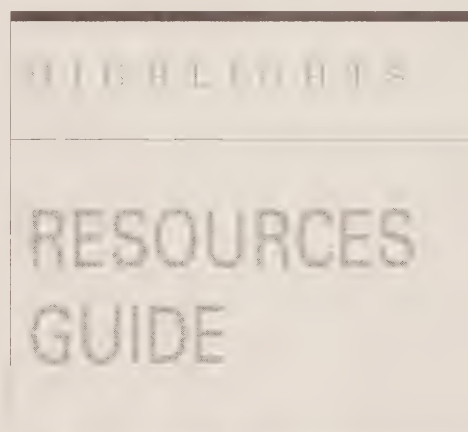
Copies of **Workable** have gone to employment agencies, businesses, colleges, universities, hospitals, libraries, government ministries, labour organizations and members of the Ontario Legislature.

Copies of **Workable** have also been provided to the federal government for its Parliamentary review of the **Employment Equity Act of Canada**. Council will be participating in this review.

Council is encouraged by the announcement of an Ontario Employment Equity Commis-

sioner who is to consult with the community and then to draft legislation. Council remains optimistic that the Commissioner will share Council's desire to move this legislation forward quickly.

The Council will be monitoring responses to **Workable** and anticipates early action by the government.

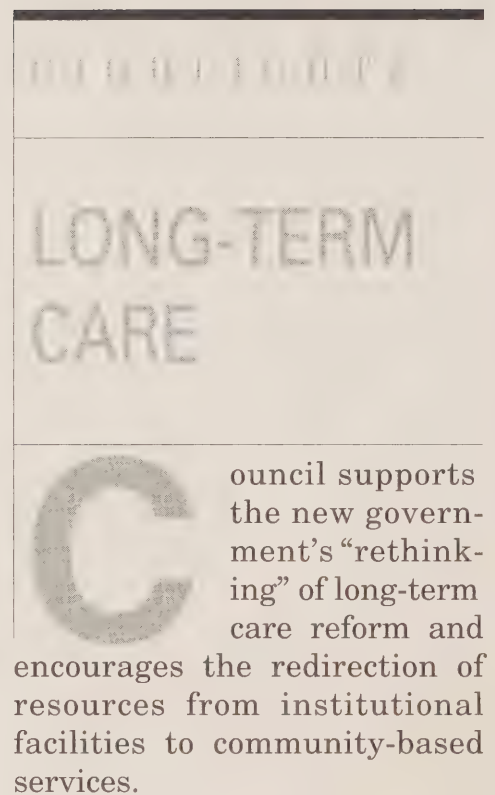


**W**hen parents are first told that their child is deaf or hard of hearing, they don't know where to turn for information. To help parents access both information and services, Council has compiled a detailed guide.

The handbook is titled **Resources, A guide for parents of deaf and hard of hearing children**, and it describes books, videos, journals, periodicals, organizations, and services which are relevant to the study, treatment and experience of hearing impairment. Topics range from first person stories, to explanations of technical devices, to synopses of medical textbooks.

The publication also includes a glossary of terms which parents will need to understand before beginning their research.

**Resources** fills a need not met by other publications.



The image shows the front cover of a publication. At the top, the word 'INTRODUCTION' is visible. Below it, the title 'LONG-TERM CARE' is printed in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. A large, stylized, textured letter 'C' is positioned on the left side of the cover, partially overlapping the title. To the right of the 'C', the text 'ouncil supports the new government's "rethinking" of long-term care reform and encourages the redirection of resources from institutional facilities to community-based services.' is written in a smaller, sans-serif font.

Council also supports the government's intention to make long-term care more sensitive to the consumer. In this regard, Council asked the government to be mindful of the importance of developing services which not only respond to the needs of the individual but which maximize the individual's control.

Council also urged the government to implement direct

funding of services. This option, which the previous government had made a commitment to test on a pilot project basis, would enable individual consumers to purchase and manage those services best able to meet their needs.

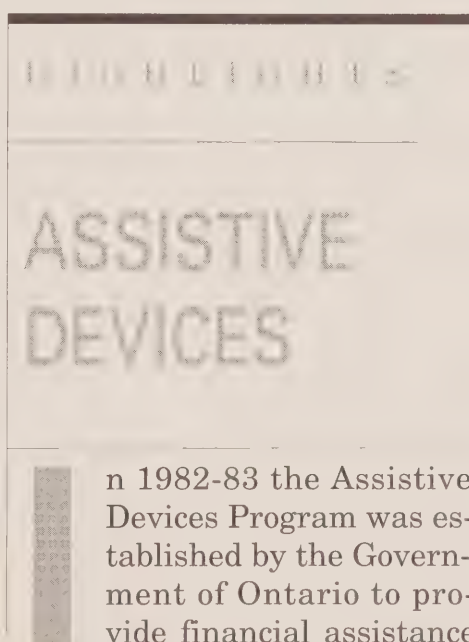
Another option worth considering, according to Council, was "brokering". This option would allow individuals to hire independent brokers to find and purchase services on their behalf.

Council would also like to encourage the government to adopt a non-medical model for long-term care. And finally, Council supports the informal training of personal care attendants. Council contends that most aspects of independent living assistance can and should be taught by the individual who is receiving the care.

Council notes, with its continued concern, that long-term care reform does not specifically address the needs of individuals who are psychiatrically disabled or who are developmentally handicapped. Council hopes that

the government will include this concern as it re-thinks long-term care reform.

Council awaits the government's announcement on the re-direction of long-term care reform and looks forward to participating in the upcoming consultation process.



In 1982-83 the Assistive Devices Program was established by the Government of Ontario to provide financial assistance for the purchase of medically necessary equipment and supplies for people with long-term physical disabilities.

Council met with the director of the program to review its activities.

In its first year of operation, the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) cost \$2 million and served over 2,000 people. By 1990-91 the program's budget had grown to \$98 million with more than 100,000 Ontario residents being served.

As government's fastest growing program, Council noted the challenges ahead for the program as it proceeds with its expansion yet tries to control costs.

Council recommended more local access to the health professionals who are authorized to prescribe assistive devices. Council would also like to see improvement in quality and safety standards which govern assistive devices. In Council's opinion, there is also a need to speed up the entire process of assessment and service delivery, including in-home services.

The Council also recommended that eligibility for the program should be extended to people with learning disabilities.

Council would also like to see the assistive devices program cover the cost of repairs to equipment.

Training in the use and maintenance of equipment should also be provided to users. This would offer some savings by extending the life of the devices, thereby avoiding early replacement as well as responding to conservation and waste issues.

Again, in the interest of cost efficiency, Council recommended that manufacturers of assistive devices adopt some standardization of parts — foot rests, battery cases, and electrical connections.

Council maintains an ongoing interest in the Assistive Devices Program and will continue to follow its growth, development and effectiveness in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

## DEAF EDUCATION

Although Council saw the need for government participation in making this information readily available, Council was clear that choices regarding a student's communication must remain the prerogative of the parent or the student.

Despite the noted shortage of qualified American Sign Language (ASL) instructors, Council recommended that instruction in ASL should be offered to both child and parents.

At Council's meeting in May of 1990, the review of Ontario's education programs for deaf and hard of hearing students was discussed at length. Several recommendations arose from that discussion which were conveyed to government.

Council was very pleased to note that the Minister of Education announced in November 1990 that ASL is to be recognized as a language of instruction in Ontario.

Following Council's recommendations, the Minister of Education further announced that responsibility for training teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing will be transferred to the Faculty of Education at York University.

The Council believes that these measures will have a positive effect on the number and quality of instructors.

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REPORT

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SOCIAL  
ASSISTANCE

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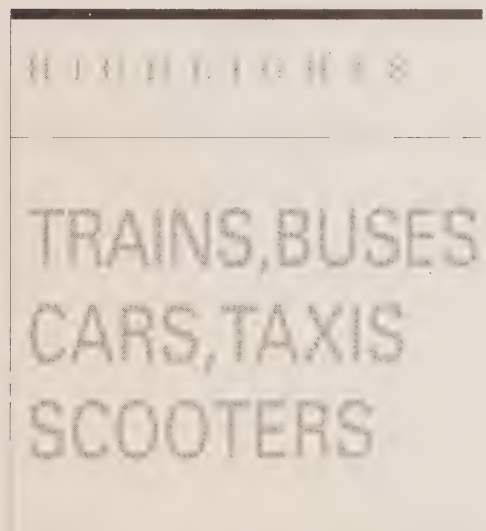
**C**ouncil welcomed progress made during 1990-91 in the area of social assistance reform. However in correspondence to the Ontario Treasurer and the Minister of Citizenship Council noted a number of ongoing concerns.

Council restated its objection to the practice of reducing benefits to individuals with disabilities when they marry someone with an income.

Council would also like to see drug benefits extended to persons with disabilities who have extraordinary drug costs, regardless of their income.

And finally Council brought to the attention of the Minister of Citizenship that the asset limit of \$3000 for recipients of GAINS-D had not been adjusted in 10 years and was too low.

Council continues to be concerned about the lack of parity in the level of pension income between senior citizens and persons with disabilities.



### **Freedom to Move is Life Itself**

In 1987, a report on transportation was released jointly by the Ontario Advisory Council on Senior Citizens and the Ontario

Advisory Council on Disability Issues. Called **The Freedom to Move is Life Itself**, it was widely circulated and has received worldwide attention. The report has become a reference point for the many interests in the transportation industry.

Council applauds the previous government's commitment to the goal of fully accessible public transportation throughout the province and welcomes the new government's promise to work toward that same goal.

### **Royal Commission on National Passenger Transportation**

In September 1990, **The Freedom to Move is Life Itself** was submitted to the Royal Commission on National Passenger Transportation, together with the Council's responses to specific questions raised by the commission.

Council's submission pointed out that the existing national

transportation network provides unsatisfactory service to people with disabilities.

Council took the opportunity to remind the commission that a prime principle to be observed in designing future transportation systems for the country is universal accessibility and that access to transportation is the right of every citizen in Canada.

---

### **Parking permits**

In May of 1990, the Ministry of Transportation introduced a new parking permit for people with disabilities as recommended in the report, **The Freedom to Move is Life Itself**. There is now a portable permit rather than fixed licence plates and the permit is recognized in all municipalities in Ontario, in all other provinces and in most American states. Temporary permits will be available to visitors to Ontario.

Council continued to advise the government against issuing more than one parking permit

for any person with disabilities. One-person-one-permit minimizes the risk of abuse of the permit through unauthorized use, thereby avoiding compromising the goals of the program.

---

### **Accessible taxis**

Noting that disabled persons use taxis eight times more often than the average, the Government of Ontario made a commitment in 1990 to make the accessible taxi pilot program ongoing. This represents an investment of \$1 million dollars per year and follows closely the recommendations made in the Council's transportation report.

Council urged the government to take measures to safeguard the financial viability of accessible taxis in communities where this service now exists.

The Council is optimistic that the use of taxis will enable many people with disabilities to achieve more flexible schedules and to live more truly integrated lives.

Council has ongoing concerns regarding the absence of accessible taxis in Metropolitan Toronto.

---

## **Scooters**

It was brought to the attention of Council that some parallel transit services were denying rides to users of scooters. This restriction originated from a recommendation made by the Ontario Urban Transit Association (OUTA) to its member municipalities.

In order to better understand the rationale behind the restriction, Council met with a representative of OUTA. The representative explained that, although there were no statistics available to show that people transported in scooters on transit vehicles were more at risk of injury or accident than those transported in wheelchairs, OUTA had become concerned about potential risk.

As a result, Council took exception to OUTA's unilateral recommendation to restrict the us-

ers of scooters. Council also noted that some parallel transit systems had adopted the OUTA recommendation without consulting with consumers.

Council also met, on this issue, with representatives of the Ministry of Transportation who indicated that the transport of persons with disabilities should be accomplished regardless of the mobility device used.

The ministry is currently working with the Canadian Standards Association on this issue. Council will continue to monitor progress on this issue.

# COUNCIL COMMENTS

## COMMENTS

### BOARDING HOMES

**F**ollowing a coroner's inquest into the death of a senior citizen living in a boarding home, the provincial government established a Commission of Inquiry into Unregulated Residential Accommodation. The Council was asked to make a submission to the commission.

In its response, the Council voiced concern for vulnerable adults living in such accommodation. The Council gave its opinion that the best way to ensure the physical safety and quality of life of residents is for the province to regulate all boarding homes and retirement homes.

The Council also urged the commission to recommend regulations which would ensure that residents with special needs were placed in appropriate facilities.

Council further recommended that regulations established by the province be enforced at the local level.

Council looks forward to reviewing the commission's final report which is due to be released in 1991.

## COMMENTS

# ELECTORAL REFORM

In April 1990, Council submitted a brief to the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing.

Council noted with concern that people with disabilities do not have equal access to the electoral process, despite some attempts to correct this unfair situation.

The enumeration process was found wanting when people in group homes, for example, are missed entirely by enumerators, or when difficulties in communicating with people with disabilities cause many eligible voters to be improperly enumerated.

The Council recommended that information regarding enumeration be available in alternate formats including braille and audio cassette.

Council also recommended that enumerators be better trained to respond to questions and concerns of voters with special needs.

The entire political process, including riding, nomination and campaign meetings, also needs to be made fully accessible to people with disabilities. Meetings should be held in accessible facilities and should include sign-language interpretation.

Residences, including group homes and institutions, must be open to canvassers and candidates who should have their campaign material in alternate and appropriate formats.

Voting procedures were also found wanting. Despite claims to the contrary, a significant number of polling places are not accessible to people with mobility impairments. The Council is

of the opinion that this is a violation of the rights of voters with disabilities as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Council recommended that all polling places in federal elections be fully accessible.

Assistance with voting and transportation to the polling place must be made more available to voters with disabilities. More effort must be made to inform voters with disabilities that accessible transportation to polling places and assistance in voting are available.

Council also stressed that deputy returning officers need to be better informed about procedures for assisting citizens in casting their ballots.

The Council is of the opinion that the rights of people with disabilities to full participation in the electoral process are not well served at the present time.

Council is pleased to note that the changes made to the Municipal Act in 1988 in order to

make municipal elections fully accessible, will be in effect for the municipal elections to be held in the fall of 1991. These elections will be the first to which the changes will apply.

Council will monitor the election process to assess the effectiveness of the new regulations.

# NATIONAL MEETING OF ADVISORY COUNCILS

NATIONAL  
MEETING

## 7 COUNCILS MEET IN QUEBEC CITY

**A**cross the country, there are seven provincial advisory councils responsible for disability issues. In May of 1990 representatives of these councils met in Quebec City to share ideas, experiences and strategies. The meeting was hosted by Paul Mercure, President and Director General of the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec.

The meeting served to strengthen ties between the different provincial councils. The meeting was an opportunity for different provinces to exchange views on disability issues relat-

ing to the federal government in an effort to develop a common strategy.

The theme of the meeting was transportation and communications, chosen to reflect the fact that persons with disabilities can not move freely in this country nor easily receive or transmit information.

Other issues discussed included B.C.'s implementation of fully accessible public transit; Manitoba's sign language interpretation bank and commitment to hearing access to all public meetings and education; and Quebec's technical innovations in the field of communications.

The meeting closed with the unanimous adoption of this motion: That the Prime Minister of Canada and the provincial premiers make the necessary arrangements at the first possible opportunity to convene a first ministers conference on issues related to equality and opportunity for Canadians with disabilities to be held prior to the end of 1992.

# REPORTS ISSUED

## REPORTS ISSUED

### RESOURCES IS LATEST PUBLICATION

**C**ouncil released its major report on employment titled, **Workable: Fulfilling the potential of people with disabilities** in the spring of 1990.

Proceedings from Council's two-day consultation meeting on children's issues was published in the spring of 1991. The report is called **Forum on Children's Issues**.

Council also produced **Resources. A guide for parents of deaf and hard of hearing children**. It lists books, periodicals, newsletters, videos, and pro-

vincial government services which could help parents get the information they need and also help them access the services their children may need.

Reports published by Council in previous years are also available. They include:

**Independent Living, The Time is Now.** A discussion paper on the future of independent living assistance in Ontario. (1988).

**The Freedom to Move is Life Itself.** A report on transportation in Ontario. (1989).

Copies of these publications are available from Council offices at 700 Bay Street, Suite 203, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z6 or by contacting Publications Ontario at 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N8. The toll-free number of Publications Ontario is 1-800-668-9938.





ONTARIO ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DISABILITY ISSUES